

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN, GERMANY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, NATO, UK, NO

SUBJECT: REPORTED DOUBTS OF UK ABILITY TO SEND REINFORCEMENTS TO
NORWAY

1. OSLO PRESS JULY 26-27 HAS GIVEN HEAVY COVERAGE TO A REPORT
ATTRIBUTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMITTEE FOR PUBLIC EXPENDITURES
CASTING DOUBT ON UK ABILITY TO SEND MILITARY REINFORCEMENTS TO
NORTHERN NORWAY IN THE EVENT OF CIRSIS OR WAR. ACCORDING TO
THE PRESS COVERAGE, REPORTEDLY REFLECTING VISIT BY THE COMMITTEE
TO NORWAY, BOTH BRITISH AND NORWEGIAN MILITARY OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT
UK REINFORCEMENTS WOULD NOT ARRIVE IN TIME UNLESS SENT BEFORE AN
ACTUAL OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES.

2. DEFENSE HEADQUARTERS CHIEF OF STAFF, ADMIRAL AKENES, COMMENTING TO
LOCAL PRESS ON THE REPORT, CONCEDED THAT UK DEFENSE REDUCTIONS HAVE
MADE RECINFORCEMENT OF NORTH NORWAY MORE DIFFICULT, BUT SAID THAT
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NORWEGIAN VIEW IS LESS PESSIMISTIC THAN THAT OF REPORT.
IN THIS CONTEXT, HE POINTED OUT DESIREABILITY OF STOCK-
PILING HEAVY EQUIPMENT IN NORTH NORWAY.

3. DEFENSE MINISTER HANSEN HAS STATED THAT THE COMMITTEE'S
FINDINGS ARE AT AVRIANCE WITH NORWEGIAN VIEWS. HE
REPORTEDLY INTENDS TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN NATO IF THE UK

CONCERN PROVES WELL FOUNDED.

4. COMMENT: THE HEAVY PRESS COVERAGE AND THE PROMPT COMMENTS BY GON OFFICIALS REFLECT THE LONGSTANDING NORWEGIAN CONCERN OVER THE TIMELINESS AND/OR ADEQUACY OF ALLIED RESPONSE TO HOSTILITIES IN NORTHERN NORWAY. WHILE FREQUENT AFFIRMATIVE STATEMENTS BY ALLIED LEADERS, MILITARY EXERCISES, SHIP VISITS, ETC., HAVE PROVIDED REASSURANCE, THE NORWEGIAN PUBLIC STILL RETAINS DOUBTS ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ALLIED HELP TO NORWAY IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS.

5. PRESS COVERAGE OF COMMONS REPORT WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE AND MAY EVEN WIDEN TO INCLUDE QUESTIONS OF US CAPABILITIES AND INTENTIONS IN REGARD TO DEFENSE OF NORTH NORWAY. WE WOULD, ACCORDINGLY, APPRECIATE AMEMBASSY LONDON'S COMMENTS ON REPORT AS WELL AS ANY DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME.
BREMER

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